



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

TO: RRAFT COMMITTEE
FROM: CHARLIE SPERRY
SUBJECT: PREPARATION FOR MEETING
DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2007

The next meeting of the RRAFT Committee is September 11, 6:30 p.m. Please note: the meeting will take place at the Double Tree Hotel (Missoula Edgewater) located at 100 Madison.

In preparation for the next meeting I want to recap our efforts thus far and provide an overview on the steps ahead. We started the planning process by reviewing the Charter for the committee, which states that the purpose of the committee is to develop recommendations for managing recreation on rivers in west-central Montana, including a recreation management plan for the Blackfoot River. We also reviewed the ground rules for the planning process, which emphasize good listening skills and honoring the interests of other committee members and the public at large.

At the second meeting committee members shared feedback from their "trap lines". The trap lines will become even more important further along in this process when we are seeking comments on the work you are doing. We also reviewed the FWP statewide river recreation rules at the second meeting. These are the rules that guide the development of river recreation management plans and rules, including the work of the RRAFT.

At the third meeting Chet Crowser presented an overview on the Blackfoot River Recreation Program that included: a historical perspective on the Blackfoot River Corridor and the Landowners' Agreement; the development of the Blackfoot River Management Direction document; the establishment of the Recreation Steering Committee; the Cooperative Management Agreement with the Bureau of Land Management; the Special Recreation Permit Program; and current management practices and law enforcement. Not everyone on the committee has the same level of familiarity with the Blackfoot River and the purpose of this presentation was to establish a common understanding of what has taken place in the past and how the river is managed today. This information is critical to the work that lies ahead.

At the fourth meeting committee members were asked to evaluate the Recreation Setting, Opportunities, and Guidelines for the seven reaches of the Blackfoot River and to identify concerns/issues for each of these reaches. The purpose of this exercise was to assess whether the Settings, Opportunities, and Guidelines established seven years ago in the Blackfoot River Recreation Management Direction are still accurate today, and to identify the problems associated with each reach of the river. If this information, or pieces thereof, remain valid today, it enables us to move on to the critical issues and concerns that you have identified.

This leads us to our next meeting and the steps to follow. We are following the basic tenets of the FWP River Recreation Rules and the Analysis and Decision-making Process for developing river management plans and rules (refer to River Recreation Management Planning Manual). On September 11 the committee will begin to develop Problem Statements for the concerns you identified and a range of management actions that could be used to address these problems.

At our last meeting there was a brief discussion about creating subcommittees to accomplish work between meetings of the full committee. At our September meeting I would like to re-visit this topic and determine whether there is interest in pursuing this and if so, the most effective way to go about it.

I thank you all for your commitment to this process!

Charlie Sperry